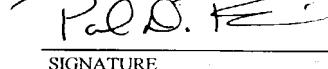


U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE (REV. 9-2001)		ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER 740-X02-011
TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US) CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371		U.S. APPLICATION NO. (If known, see 37 CFR 1.5 101088717
INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/EP00/09166	INTERNATIONAL FILING DATE 19 September 2000	PRIORITY DATE CLAIMED 20 September 1999
TITLE OF INVENTION WASHING DEVICE FOR A CAR WASH UNIT		
APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/EO/US Günter WINDEL		
Applicant herewith submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:		
<p>1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This is a FIRST submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.</p> <p>2. <input type="checkbox"/> This is a SECOND or SUBSEQUENT submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.</p> <p>3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This is an express request to begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. 371(f)). The submission must include items (5), (6), (9) and (21) indicated below.</p> <p>4. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The US has been elected by the expiration of 19 months from the priority date (Article 31).</p> <p>5. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <input type="checkbox"/> is attached hereto (required only if not communicated by the International Bureau). b. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> has been communicated by the International Bureau. c. <input type="checkbox"/> is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US). <p>6. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An English language translation of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is attached hereto. b. <input type="checkbox"/> has been previously submitted under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4). <p>7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <input type="checkbox"/> are attached hereto (required only if not communicated by the International Bureau). b. <input type="checkbox"/> have been communicated by the International Bureau. c. <input type="checkbox"/> have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired. d. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> have not been made and will not be made. <p>8. <input type="checkbox"/> An English language translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)).</p> <p>9. <input type="checkbox"/> An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(4)).</p> <p>10. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An English language translation of the annexes of the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(5)).</p>		
Items 11 to 20 below concern document(s) or information included:		
<p>11. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98.</p> <p>12. <input type="checkbox"/> An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included.</p> <p>13. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A FIRST preliminary amendment.</p> <p>14. <input type="checkbox"/> A SECOND or SUBSEQUENT preliminary amendment.</p> <p>15. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A substitute specification.</p> <p>16. <input type="checkbox"/> A change of power of attorney and/or address letter.</p> <p>17. <input type="checkbox"/> A computer-readable form of the sequence listing in accordance with PCT Rule 13ter.2 and 35 U.S.C. 1.821 - 1.825.</p> <p>18. <input type="checkbox"/> A second copy of the published international application under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4).</p> <p>19. <input type="checkbox"/> A second copy of the English language translation of the international application under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4).</p> <p>20. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other items or information: FORMAL DRAWINGS (4 SHEETS) MARKED-UP SPECIFICATION COPIES OF REFERENCES CITED IN IDS AND COPY OF SEARCH REPORT FROM PCT/EP01/03221 POSTCARD AND EXPRESS MAIL CERTIFICATE </p>		

10/088717

INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO.
PCT/EP00/09166

ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER
740-X02-011

U.S. APPLICATION NUMBER 10/088717		INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/EP00/09166	ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER 740-X02-011
<p>21. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The following fees are submitted:</p> <p>BASIC NATIONAL FEE (37 CFR 1.492 (a) (1) - (5)):</p> <p>Neither international preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) nor international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO and International Search Report not prepared by the EPO or JPO \$1040.00</p> <p>International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but International Search Report prepared by the EPO or JPO \$890.00</p> <p>International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO \$740.00</p> <p>International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) paid to USPTO but all claims did not satisfy provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4) \$710.00</p> <p>International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) paid to USPTO and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4) \$100.00</p>		CALCULATIONS PTO USE ONLY	
ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT =		\$ 890.00	
Surcharge of \$130.00 for furnishing the oath or declaration later than <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(e)).		\$ 130.00	
CLAIMS	NUMBER FILED	NUMBER EXTRA	RATE
Total claims	22 - 20 =	2	x \$18.00
Independent claims	1 - 3 =	0	x \$84.00
MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM(S) (if applicable)		+ \$280.00	
TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS =		\$ 1056.00	
<input type="checkbox"/> Applicant claims small entity status. See 37 CFR 1.27. The fees indicated above are reduced by 1/2.		+	
		SUBTOTAL =	\$ 1056.00
Processing fee of \$130.00 for furnishing the English translation later than <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(f)).		\$	
TOTAL NATIONAL FEE =		\$ 1056.00	
Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28, 3.31). \$40.00 per property		+	
TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED =		\$ 1056.00	
		Amount to be refunded:	\$
		charged:	\$
<p>a. <input type="checkbox"/> A check in the amount of \$ _____ to cover the above fees is enclosed.</p> <p>b. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please charge my Deposit Account No. <u>500601</u> in the amount of \$ <u>1,056.00</u> to cover the above fees. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.</p> <p>c. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. <u>500601</u>. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.</p> <p>d. <input type="checkbox"/> Fees are to be charged to a credit card. WARNING: Information on this form may become public. Credit card information should not be included on this form. Provide credit card information and authorization on PTO-2038.</p>			
<p>NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR 1.137 (a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.</p> <p>SEND ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO: MARTIN FLEIT Fleit, Kain, Gibbons, Gutman & Bongini P.L. 520 Brickell Key Drive #A201 Miami, FL 33131</p> <p>Tel (305) 536-9020; Fax (305) 536-9022 Email mfileit@fleitkain.com</p>			
 <p>SIGNATURE Martin Fleit <i>By: PAUL D. BIANCO</i></p> <p>NAME 16,900 <i>Regt 43,500</i></p> <p>REGISTRATION NUMBER</p>			

PATENT

Attorney Docket No.: 740-X02-011

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: G. Windel

Serial No.: New Patent Application; National Stage of PCT No. PCT/EP00/09166

Group Art Unit:

Filed: Herewith

Examiner:

For/Title: WASHING DEVICE FOR A CAR WASH UNIT

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

BOX PCT
Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

Dear Sir:

Please amend the above-identified application as follows prior to an examination on the merits and calculation of any fees:

In the Specification

Please substitute the attached substitute specification for the specification originally filed. A marked-up copy of the specification showing changes is also attached. The substitute specification does not include any new matter.

In the Abstract

Please amend the abstract as indicated in the marked-up copy of the specification and substitute specification. The as-amended abstract does not contain any new matter.

In the Claims

Please cancel claims 1-16 and add the following new claims:

17. (New) A washing device for a car wash unit, the washing device mounted on a shaft and comprising:

a plurality of substantially transverse spaced bristle and strip wash elements on a periphery of the washing device that are arranged in an alternating manner,

wherein the bristle wash elements have a greater length than the strip wash elements and the bristle wash elements are coarser than the strip wash elements.

18. (New) The washing device of claim 17 wherein the strip wash elements are made of a plastic foam.

19. (New) The washing device of claim 18 wherein the plastic foam is a closed-pore polyethylene foam.

20. (New) The washing device of claim 17 wherein the strip wash elements are made of a fiber material.

21. (New) The washing device of claim 20 wherein the fiber material is cloth or felt.

22. (New) The washing device of claim 17 wherein the strip wash elements comprise individual thin strips or cloths with slits.

23. (New) The washing device of claim 17 wherein the bristle and strip wash elements are arranged in an alternating manner in a circumferential direction.
24. (New) The washing device of claim 17 wherein the bristle and strip wash elements are arranged in an alternating manner in an axial direction.
25. (New) The washing device of claim 17 further comprising groove rings and wherein the bristle and strip wash elements are secured to the groove rings and wherein the bristle wash elements are configured as bristle tufts.
26. (New) The washing device of claim 25 wherein the bristle wash elements are made of polyethylene, polyamide, or polypropylene.
27. (New) The washing device of claim 17 wherein the washing device is a scrub brush and the bristle and strip wash elements are arranged in a lower region of the scrub brush rotating about a substantially vertical axis.
28. (New) The washing device of claim 17 wherein the washing device is a scrub brush and the bristle and strip wash elements are arranged on two end regions of the scrub brush rotating about a substantially horizontal axis.
29. (New) The washing device of claim 17 further comprising groove rings arranged in twist-lock manner on the shaft and wherein the bristle and strip wash elements are secured to the groove rings.
30. (New) The washing device of claim 17 wherein the washing device has upper and lower regions and the plurality of alternating bristle and strip wash elements are located in the lower region.
31. (New) The washing device of claim 17 further comprising groove rings arranged on the shaft and wherein at least one of the groove rings includes twelve rows of bristle

wash elements and twelve rows of strip wash elements arranged in uniform alternation and distributed about the groove ring circumference.

32. (New) The washing device of claim 17 wherein the bristle wash elements in a fully extended condition are around 5 cm longer than the strip wash elements.

33. (New) The washing device of claim 17 wherein the bristle wash elements are fastened in radial openings on the washing device and arranged between axial grooves that accommodate the strip wash elements.

34. (New) The washing device of claim 33 wherein the radial openings are on the shaft.

35. (New) The washing device of claim 17 wherein the bristle wash elements and the strip wash elements are each arranged in bundles and are uniformly distributed peripherally and axially, and the bundles are secured in radial openings on the washing device.

36. (New) The washing device of claim 35 wherein at least some of the radial openings contain both bristle and strip wash elements.

37. (New) The washing device of claim 35 wherein the radial openings are on the shaft.

38. (New) The washing device of claim 17 wherein each bristle wash element comprises a row of bristle tufts.

Remarks

The specification has been amended to add section headings. Additionally, a Summary of the Invention Section, based on the translation of the as-filed claims, has

been inserted. The abstract has been amended to place it in compliance with United States patent practice. The claims have been canceled and new claims have been added to conform the claims to United States patent practice and remove multiple dependencies. No new matter has been added.

Respectfully submitted,



Martin Fleit, Reg. #16,900
By: Paul D. Bianco, Reg. #43,500

Martin Fleit
FLEIT KAIN GIBBONS GUTMAN & BONGINI
520 Brickell Key Drive #A201
Miami, Florida 33131
Tel: 305-536-9020; Fax: 305-536-9022
e-mail: MFleit@FleitKain.com

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531 Rec'd PCT/PTC 19 MAR 2002

PATENT

Attorney Docket No.: 740-X02-011

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: G. Windel

Serial No.: New Patent Application; National Stage of PCT No. PCT/EP00/09166

Group Art Unit:

Filed: Herewith

Examiner:

For/Title: WASHING DEVICE FOR A CAR WASH UNIT

SUBSTITUTE SPECIFICATION

531 Rec'd PCT/Pt. 19 MAR 2002

WASHING DEVICE FOR A CAR WASH UNIT**Field of the Invention**

[0001] The invention concerns a rotating or revolving washing device, especially a scrub brush for car wash units.

Background of the Invention

[0002] Such a scrub brush is known from U.S. Patent No. 4,377,878. At the periphery of the shaft of the scrub brush, soft pliant wash elements made from felt and stiff bristles are arranged in an alternating manner in the circumferential direction. The bristles are distinctly shorter than the wash elements and serve as support elements for them. The bristles are not involved in the washing process, nor are they washing elements. The washing of the vehicle is accomplished only by the soft pliant wash elements made of felt or another fibrous material.

Although such wash elements are advantageous when used for gently washing a vehicle, they do not provide an optimal cleaning action.

[0003] German Utility Model DE-U-92 14 265 shows a scrub brush with a mixture of bristle-like coarse wash elements and strip-like soft wash elements made from a fibrous web. The scrub brush here is divided into several segments along its length, and the different wash elements alternate in the axial direction of the brush. There are bristles at the upper and lower region of the vertical side brush, while the softer fibrous web strips are arranged in the center region. The bristles and the fibrous web strips have the same length here. The bristles possess good cleaning ability and are even able to loosen and remove stuck-on dirt, but there is the danger of them causing minor damage to the surface being cleaned.

[0004] A similar scrub brush is known from U.S. Patent No. 3,613,140. This is designed as a horizontal wheel washing brush and consists of various wash

elements, which differ in material and length and are arranged in an alternating manner in the lengthwise direction of the brush. The longer wash elements are supposed to reach the insides of the vehicle's wheel or rim and consist of a soft bristle-like material. The shorter and likewise bristle-like wash elements are supposed to clean the exterior wheel and rim areas and are harder or stiffer than the longer bristles. They should consist of nylon or metal wire.

[0005] German Utility Model DE-U-93 01 692 shows another vertical side brush, which is designed similar to the aforesaid side brush of DE-U-92 14 265. Here as well, the side brush has only bristles in the lower region and textile strips in the upper region; furthermore, shorter supporting bristles can be arranged. The bristles and textile strips have the same length, while the bristles for the support function can also be shorter.

[0006] European Patent Application EP-A-0876778 shows a washing device for car wash units that has bristles of different length, and these bristles may also have different stiffnesses.

[0007] Therefore, the problem is to modify a generic washing device so that an improved and more thorough washing of vehicles is made possible.

Summary of the Invention

[0008] The present invention relates to a washing device, such as a scrub brush, that can be mounted on a shaft to rotate and/or moved in a linear direction. The washing device has several essentially transverse spaced bristle-like and strip-like wash elements on its periphery. These wash elements are arranged in an alternating manner in the circumferential direction and/or in the axial direction and the bristle-like wash elements have a greater length than the strip-like wash elements. The bristle-like wash elements are also coarser than the strip-like wash elements. In one embodiment, the bristle-like wash elements

in the stretched-out condition are around five cm longer than the strip-like wash elements.

[0009] The strip-like wash elements can be made of a plastic foam, preferably a closed-pore polyethylene foam, or a fiber material, preferably cloth or felt. The strip-like wash elements can be made of individual thin strips or of cloths with slits.

[0010] The wash elements can be secured to groove rings located on the shaft, with the bristle-like wash elements configured as bristle tufts and consisting of a thread-like plastic material, preferably polyethylene, polyamide or polypropylene. The groove rings can be arranged in a twist-lock manner on the shaft.

[0011] In one embodiment, the bristle-like and strip-like wash elements are arranged in a lower region of a scrub brush rotating about an essentially vertical axis. For example, the wash elements can be fastened to the lower groove rings, preferably to the bottom four groove rings of the scrub brush. In another embodiment, the bristle-like and strip-like wash elements are arranged in two marginal areas of a scrub brush rotating about an essentially horizontal axis.

[0012] The washing device can be provided with twelve rows of bristle-like wash elements and twelve rows of strip-like wash elements arranged in uniform alternation and distributed about the circumference on the individual groove ring. An individual bristle row can have six bristle tufts, each with 36 threads, for example.

[0013] The washing device can be made so that the bristle-like wash elements are fastened in radial openings on the shaft or the groove ring and arranged between axial grooves, which are designed to accommodate the strip-

like wash elements. The bristle-like wash elements and the strip-like wash elements can each be arranged in bundles or individually and are uniformly distributed peripherally and axially, and the bundles are secured in their own radial openings on the shaft or the groove ring. Alternatively, the bristle-like wash elements and the strip-like wash elements are secured in common radial openings on the shaft or the groove ring.

Brief Description of the Drawings

- [0014] Details of the invention are schematically depicted in the drawing.
- [0015] Figure 1 shows a vertical section through a scrub brush with bristle-like bundles and strip-like wash elements arranged in an alternating manner in the circumferential direction;
- [0016] Figure 2 shows a vertical section through a vertical washing brush with bristle bundles and strip-like wash elements distributed in the lower region;
- [0017] Figure 3 shows a cross section through a scrub brush;
- [0018] Figure 4 shows a lengthwise section through a groove ring to accommodate bristle bundles and strip-like wash elements;
- [0019] Figure 5 shows a variant of Figure 2 as a roof brush for a vehicle;
- [0020] Figure 6 shows a variant of the distribution and attachment of the wash elements; and
- [0021] Figure 7 shows a top view of an attachment per Figure 6.

Detailed Description of the Invention

[0022] In the example of Figure 1, a washing device (1) is shown, which is configured in the preferred sample embodiment as a rotating scrub brush (1), especially a side brush. The carrying element of the scrub brush (1), such as a shaft (2), can turn essentially about the vertical axis and is driven by a motor. The mounting and the propulsion are consistent with the state of the art and require no further explanation.

[0023] In the sample embodiment there are several adjoining groove rings (8) attached in twist-lock manner in succession on the shaft (2). The groove rings (8) serve to accommodate strip-like wash elements (4) and bristle-like wash elements (3), which are preferably arranged in bundles (18).

[0024] The arrangement of the bristle-like wash elements (3) and the strip-like wash elements (4) occurs at the groove rings (8) in a closely-spaced alternation or a tight blending, as is especially evident from Figures 3 and 6. The alternation or alternating positioning of the different wash elements (3, 4) can be of various kinds. Preferably, there is an alternation at least in the circumferential direction of the scrub brush (1). In addition, an alternation in the axial direction (20) of the scrub brush (1) can occur. In the preferred embodiment, the different wash elements (3, 4) immediately follow each other. As an alternative, any other given pattern of alternation is also possible. For example, small groups of two strips (4) each alternate with groups of two bristle bundles (3, 18) each in the peripheral direction. The groups can also be of different size.

[0025] The strip-like wash elements (4) in the depicted example are configured as radially spaced cloths, having slits on their exterior edges, and thereby producing narrow strips (5). As an alternative, the wash elements (4) can also consist of individual thin strips or bundles or tufts (18) of individual strips.

[0026] The bristle-like wash elements (3) are longer than the strip-like wash elements (4). When stretched out, the tips (6) of the bristle-like wash elements

(3) extend beyond the ends of the strip-like wash elements (4) or the slit strips (5) by the distance (13) (cf. Figure 3). When the scrub brush (1) is rotating and freely unfolded, the projecting bristle-like wash elements (3) determine the outer circumference (21). Thus, the projecting bristle tips (6) are the first to make contact with the vehicle (16) and commence an intensive cleaning of the vehicle surfaces. The strip-like wash elements (4) then follow up, especially as the scrub brush (1) progressively penetrates deeper, and they complete the cleaning in a gentle manner.

[0027] The strip-like wash elements (4) consist of a soft, compressible material. They have a thickness of around 2 mm to 3 mm and in the preferred embodiment they are made from a closed-pore polyethylene foam, which takes up little water. As an alternative, they can also consist of a fibrous material, such as cloth or felt or any other suitable material.

[0028] The bristle-like wash elements (3), on the other hand, consist of a harder, thin threadlike synthetic material. For example, they are made of polyethylene and have an X-shaped cross section. Polyamide, polypropylene or other materials can also be considered as alternatives. The individual bristles (3) can be assembled into tufts (18) of bristles.

[0029] In the sample embodiment of Figure 1, the alternating peripheral arrangement of bristle-like wash elements (3) and strip-like wash elements (4) extends over the entire length of the scrub brush (1). The peripheral distribution and positioning of the wash elements (3, 4) can remain the same for the length of the brush. But as an alternative, the additional alternation of the wash elements (3, 4) depicted in the drawing can also occur in the axial direction.

[0030] Figure 2 shows a variant in which the scrub brush (1) has alternately arranged groups of bristle-like wash elements (3) and groups of strip-like wash

elements (4) only in its lower region (7). The alternation in this case, once again, can occur in the peripheral direction and additionally in the axial direction.

[0031] When such a scrub brush (1) per Figure 2 is used as a side brush in car wash units, the lower regions (7) of the scrub brush (1) particularly work on the especially grimy zones of the vehicle, for example, the door sill region, and tough grime is removed due to the alternating arrangement of bristles (3) and strips (4). However, the paint surface is treated gently.

[0032] In the sample embodiment of Figure 3, a scrub brush (1) is shown in cross section, on whose shaft (2) several groove rings (8) are arranged in succession, twist-locked by springs (9). For sake of clarity, the length of the wash elements (3, 4) is shown foreshortened. A plurality of axial grooves (11) is distributed uniformly at the outer periphery of the groove ring (8). In the example, there are twelve axial grooves (11) present, in which the folded strip-like wash elements (4) are introduced and held by means of lock pins (12).

[0033] In the area between the grooves (11), there are twelve radial openings or boreholes (14), which are designed to accommodate the bristle bundles (3). The example of Figure 4 shows that six boreholes (14) are arranged along a surface line of the groove ring (8) to accommodate the bristle tufts (18), so that there are twelve series of such bristle bundles distributed over the circumference.

[0034] In practice, it has proven to be advantageous to equip the bottom four groove rings (8) with the alternately arranged bristle bundles (3) and strip-like wash elements (4) in a vertical scrub brush per Figure 2. Hence, Figure 2 must not be taken as true to scale.

[0035] The number of radially projecting bristle threads per tuft (18) is 2×36 , yet this specification as well must only be taken as an example.

[0036] The distance (13) between the tips (6) of the bristles (3) and the free ends of the strip-like wash elements (4) is around 5 cm in the sample embodiment. The strip-like wash elements (4), as in the state of the art (European Patent Application EU-A-0 934 710), are folded double and secured in the grooves (11) of the groove ring (8) by locking pins (12). The tips of these strip-like wash elements (4) are slotted to form strips (5) around 4 mm in width.

[0037] Figure 5 shows a variant of Figure 2, the scrub brush (1) being designed as a horizontal roof brush and being located in the washing position at a vehicle (16). This scrub brush (1) has areas (7) with peripherally alternating wash elements (3, 4) at both ends. The length of the region (7) can vary at will. In the sample embodiment shown, it comprises two groove rings (8). In this arrangement, the alternating washing elements (3, 4) are situated at the marginal areas of the vehicle and in particular at the roof edge regions (17) on both sides. In this way, the longer bristle-like washing elements (3) can especially easily reach the roof edge regions (17) and effectively wash them. This is especially advantageous at the roof junction zone and the sloping side surfaces of the vehicle body. Especially for vehicles with laterally recessed roofs, this supports the washing action of the side brushes, which cannot always optimally reach the slanting side surfaces of the body and especially the roof edge regions (17).

[0038] Figures 6 and 7 show a variant for the fastening technique and the positioning possibilities of the different wash elements (3, 4). Figure 6 shows a lengthwise section through a groove ring (9) and a shaft (2). Its surface is provided with several radial boreholes (14, 15), in which the bristle-like wash elements (3) assembled into bundles (18) and also the strip-like wash elements (4) likewise presented here as individual strips and possibly also assembled into bundles (18) are secured. For the attachment, suitable fastening elements (19) are used at the inside end of the opening or borehole (14, 15), being configured as a staple or a strap and engaging with loops of the bundles (18) or the wash elements (3, 4).

[0039] Figure 6 shows various positioning options. In the uppermost picture, bristles (3) and strips (4) are jointly secured in an opening (14, 15). In this case, all or only some of the openings (14, 15) of the fastening ring (9) or the shaft (2) can be outfitted in this manner. This variant is the closest packing of the alternately arranged or mingled wash elements (3, 4).

[0040] In the lower portion of Figure 6, a different variant is shown. Here, the bristles (3) and strips (4) are arranged separately and each secured in their own openings (14, 15). As the picture shows, the alternating sequence here can be different from the preceding sample embodiments. There is a pattern of pairs, every two strips (4) or strip bundles (18) alternating with two bristles (3) or bristle bundles (18). The alternating sequence here is depicted in the axial direction of the lengthwise axis (20). But it can also exist additionally or alternatively in the circumferential direction. The openings (14, 15) can be arranged in uniform circumferential and axial rows.

[0041] Figure 7 shows a variant for the configuration and arrangement of the openings (14, 15). The openings (14) are configured as cylindrical boreholes and serve here primarily to fasten bundles (18) of bristles (3). The other boreholes (15) have an essentially rectangular configuration in cross section and serve to secure individual strips (4) or small strip bundles (18). As the arrangement in Figure 7 illustrates, there are four boreholes (15) provided for the strips (4), arranged in a cross and surrounded on the outside by six cylindrical boreholes (14) for the bristle bundles (18). This positioning pattern may repeat itself appropriately in the peripheral direction and/or the axial direction.

[0042] Various modifications of the depicted embodiments are possible. First, the materials and the distribution of the wash elements (3, 4) can vary at will. In the embodiment depicted, the peripheral distribution at each groove ring (8) is identical. As an alternative, it can also vary from one groove ring to another. In

this case, not only the peripheral distribution and alternation pattern, but also the number of different wash elements (3, 4) can vary. The aforementioned axial alternation of the wash elements (3, 4) in the depicted embodiment is accomplished by a mutual twisting of the groove rings (8) each time by one peripheral alternation increment of the wash elements (3, 4). As an alternative, the outfitting of the groove rings (8) with the wash elements can also be appropriately twisted.

[0043] Furthermore, the fastening of the wash elements (3, 4) to the carrying element (2) can vary at will. Instead of the groove rings (8), other fastening elements can also be used, for example, ones consisting of rigid half-shell elements, elastic sleeves, or the like. The wash elements (3, 4) can also be fastened directly on the shaft (2) or another carrying element. Instead of groove fastenings, any other connection techniques can also be used.

[0044] In a further modification, the washing devices (1) also need not be configured as rotating scrub brushes with a rigid shaft (2) and a single axis of rotation. They can also have any other configuration and can consist of revolving bands with wash elements (3, 4) on the outside or any other design. There can also be several axes of rotation or movement in this case.

LIST OF REFERENCE NUMBERS

- 1 Washing device, scrub brush
- 2 Carrying element, shaft
- 3 Wash element, bristles
- 4 Wash element, strips
- 5 Slit strips
- 6 Tips of bristles
- 7 Lower region of scrub brush
- 8 Groove ring, fastening ring
- 9 Spring

- 10 Periphery
- 11 Groove
- 12 Locking pin
- 13 Spacing
- 14 Radial opening, borehole
- 15 Radial opening, borehole
- 16 Vehicle
- 17 Roof edge region
- 18 Bundle, tuft
- 19 Fastening element
- 20 Lengthwise axis, axial direction
- 21 Outer circumference

ABSTRACT

WASHING DEVICE FOR A CAR WASH UNIT

The invention relates to a washing device, in particular a wash brush for car wash units, which is rotationally or peripherally positioned and powered. The washing device has several essentially horizontal projecting, bristle type wash elements located at its periphery and several strip-shaped wash elements which are arranged in an alternating fashion. The bristle-shaped wash elements are longer and harder than the strip shaped wash elements. The strip-shaped wash elements can be made of a closed pore foam material or a fiber material. The wash elements can be arranged in an alternating fashion in the peripheral direction and/or the axial direction.

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WASHING DEVICE FOR A CAR WASH UNIT

Field of the Invention

The invention concerns a rotating or revolving washing device, especially a scrub brush for car wash units [with the features in the preamble of the main claim].

Background of the Invention

Such a scrub brush is known from [US-A-] U.S. Patent No. 4,377,878. At the periphery of the shaft of the scrub brush, soft pliant wash elements made from felt and stiff bristles are arranged in an alternating manner in the circumferential direction. The bristles are distinctly shorter than the wash elements and serve as support elements for them. The bristles are not involved in the washing process, nor are they washing elements. The washing of the vehicle is accomplished only by the soft pliant wash elements made of felt or another fibrous material. Although such wash elements are advantageous when used for gently washing a vehicle, they do not provide an optimal cleaning action.

German Utility Model DE-U-92 14 265 shows a scrub brush with a mixture of bristle-like coarse wash elements and strip-like soft wash elements made from a fibrous web. The scrub brush here is divided into several segments along its length, and the different wash elements alternate in the axial direction of the brush. There are bristles at the upper and lower region of the vertical side brush, while the softer fibrous web strips are arranged in the center region. The bristles and the fibrous web strips have the same length here. The bristles possess good cleaning ability and are even able to loosen and remove stuck-on dirt, but there is the danger of them causing minor damage to the surface being cleaned.

A similar scrub brush is known from [US-A-] U.S. Patent No. 3,613,140. This is designed as a horizontal wheel washing brush and consists of various wash elements, which differ in material and length and are arranged in an alternating manner in the lengthwise direction of the brush. The longer wash elements are supposed to reach the

insides of the vehicle's wheel or rim and consist of a soft bristle-like material. The shorter and likewise bristle-like wash elements are supposed to clean the exterior wheel and rim areas and are harder or stiffer than the longer bristles. They should consist of nylon or metal wire.

German Utility Model DE-U-93 01 692[, finally,] shows another vertical side brush, which is designed similar to the aforesaid side brush of DE-U-92 14 265. Here as well, the side brush has only bristles in the lower region and textile strips in the upper region; furthermore, shorter supporting bristles can be arranged. The bristles and textile strips have the same length, while the bristles for the support function can also be shorter.

European Patent Application EP-A-0876778 shows a washing device for car wash units that has bristles of different length, and these bristles may also have different stiffnesses.

Therefore, the problem is to modify a generic washing device so that an improved and more thorough washing of vehicles is made possible.

[This problem is solved with the characterizing features of Claim 1. Advantageous embodiments will be found in the subsidiary claims.]

Summary of the Invention

The present invention relates to a washing device, such as a scrub brush, that can be mounted on a shaft to rotate and/or moved in a linear direction. The washing device has several essentially transverse spaced bristle-like and strip-like wash elements on its periphery. These wash elements are arranged in an alternating manner in the circumferential direction and/or in the axial direction and the bristle-like wash elements have a greater length than the strip-like wash elements. The bristle-like wash elements are also coarser than the strip-like wash elements. In one embodiment, the bristle-like wash elements in the stretched-out condition are around five cm longer than the strip-like wash elements.

The strip-like wash elements can be made of a plastic foam, preferably a closed-pore polyethylene foam, or a fiber material, preferably cloth or felt. The strip-like wash elements can be made of individual thin strips or of cloths with slits.

The wash elements can be secured to groove rings located on the shaft, with the bristle-like wash elements configured as bristle tufts and consisting of a thread-like plastic material, preferably polyethylene, polyamide or polypropylene. The groove rings can be arranged in a twist-lock manner on the shaft.

In one embodiment, the bristle-like and strip-like wash elements are arranged in a lower region of a scrub brush rotating about an essentially vertical axis. For example, the wash elements can be fastened to the lower groove rings, preferably to the bottom four groove rings of the scrub brush. In another embodiment, the bristle-like and strip-like wash elements are arranged in two marginal areas of a scrub brush rotating about an essentially horizontal axis.

The washing device can be provided with twelve rows of bristle-like wash elements and twelve rows of strip-like wash elements arranged in uniform alternation and distributed about the circumference on the individual groove ring. An individual bristle row can have six bristle tufts, each with 36 threads, for example.

The washing device can be made so that the bristle-like wash elements are fastened in radial openings on the shaft or the groove ring and arranged between axial grooves, which are designed to accommodate the strip-like wash elements. The bristle-like wash elements and the strip-like wash elements can each be arranged in bundles or individually and are uniformly distributed peripherally and axially, and the bundles are secured in their own radial openings on the shaft or the groove ring. Alternatively, the bristle-like wash elements and the strip-like wash elements are secured in common radial openings on the shaft or the groove ring.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Details of the invention are schematically depicted in the drawing. [This shows:]

Figure 1[:] shows a vertical section through a scrub brush with bristle-like bundles and strip-like wash elements arranged in an alternating manner in the circumferential direction[,];

Figure 2[:] shows a vertical section through a vertical washing brush with bristle bundles and strip-like wash elements distributed in the lower region[,];

Figure 3[:] shows a cross section through a scrub brush[,];

Figure 4[:] shows a lengthwise section through a groove ring to accommodate bristle bundles and strip-like wash elements[,];

Figure 5[:] shows a variant of Figure 2 as a roof brush for a vehicle[,];

Figure 6[:] shows a variant of the distribution and attachment of the wash elements[,]; and

Figure 7[:] shows a top view of an attachment per Figure 6.

Detailed Description of the Invention

In the example of Figure 1, a washing device (1) is shown, which is configured in the preferred sample embodiment as a rotating scrub brush (1), especially a side brush. The carrying element of the scrub brush (1), such as a shaft (2), can turn essentially about the vertical axis and is driven by a motor. The mounting and the propulsion are consistent with the state of the art and require no further explanation.

In the sample embodiment there are several adjoining groove rings (8) attached in twist-lock manner in succession on the shaft (2). The groove rings (8) serve to accommodate

strip-like wash elements (4) and bristle-like wash elements (3), which are preferably arranged in bundles (18).

The arrangement of the bristle-like wash elements (3) and the strip-like wash elements (4) occurs at the groove rings (8) in a closely-spaced alternation or a tight blending, as is especially evident from Figures 3 and 6. The alternation or alternating positioning of the different wash elements (3, 4) can be of various kinds. Preferably, there is an alternation at least in the circumferential direction of the scrub brush (1). In addition, an alternation in the axial direction (20) of the scrub brush (1) can occur. In the preferred embodiment, the different wash elements (3, 4) immediately follow each other. As an alternative, any other given pattern of alternation is also possible. For example, small groups of two strips (4) each alternate with groups of two bristle bundles (3, 18) each in the peripheral direction. The groups can also be of different size.

The strip-like wash elements (4) in the depicted example are configured as radially spaced cloths, having slits on their exterior edges, and thereby producing narrow strips (5). As an alternative, the wash elements (4) can also consist of individual thin strips or bundles or tufts (18) of individual strips.

The bristle-like wash elements (3) are longer than the strip-like wash elements (4). When stretched out, the tips (6) of the bristle-like wash elements (3) extend beyond the ends of the strip-like wash elements (4) or the slit strips (5) by the distance (13) (cf. Figure 3). When the scrub brush (1) is rotating and freely unfolded, the projecting bristle-like wash elements (3) determine the outer circumference (21). Thus, the projecting bristle tips (6) are the first to make contact with the vehicle (16) and commence an intensive cleaning of the vehicle surfaces. The strip-like wash elements (4) then follow up, especially as the scrub brush (1) progressively penetrates deeper, and they complete the cleaning in a gentle manner.

The strip-like wash elements (4) consist of a soft, compressible material. They have a thickness of around 2 mm to 3 mm and in the preferred embodiment they are made

from a closed-pore polyethylene foam, which takes up little water. As an alternative, they can also consist of a fibrous material, such as cloth or felt or any other suitable material.

The bristle-like wash elements (3), on the other hand, consist of a harder, thin threadlike synthetic material. For example, they are made of polyethylene and have an X-shaped cross section. Polyamide, polypropylene or other materials can also be considered as alternatives. The individual bristles (3) can be assembled into tufts (18) of bristles.

In the sample embodiment of Figure 1, the alternating peripheral arrangement of bristle-like wash elements (3) and strip-like wash elements (4) extends over the entire length of the scrub brush (1). The peripheral distribution and positioning of the wash elements (3, 4) can remain the same for the length of the brush. But as an alternative, the additional alternation of the wash elements (3, 4) depicted in the drawing can also occur in the axial direction.

Figure 2 shows a variant in which the scrub brush (1) has alternately arranged groups of bristle-like wash elements (3) and groups of strip-like wash elements (4) only in its lower region (7). The alternation in this case, once again, can occur in the peripheral direction and additionally in the axial direction.

When such a scrub brush (1) per Figure 2 is used as a side brush in car wash units, the lower regions (7) of the scrub brush (1) particularly work on the especially grimy zones of the vehicle, for example, the door sill region, and tough grime is removed due to the alternating arrangement of bristles (3) and strips (4). However, the paint surface is treated gently.

In the sample embodiment of Figure 3, a scrub brush (1) is shown in cross section, on whose shaft (2) several groove rings (8) are arranged in succession, twist-locked by springs (9). For sake of clarity, the length of the wash elements (3, 4) is shown foreshortened. A plurality of axial grooves (11) is distributed uniformly at the outer

periphery of the groove ring (8). In the example, there are twelve axial grooves (11) present, in which the folded strip-like wash elements (4) are introduced and held by means of lock pins (12).

In the area between the grooves (11), there are twelve radial openings or boreholes (14), which are designed to accommodate the bristle bundles (3). The example of Figure 4 shows that six boreholes (14) are arranged along a surface line of the groove ring (8) to accommodate the bristle tufts (18), so that there are twelve series of such bristle bundles distributed over the circumference.

In practice, it has proven to be advantageous to equip the bottom four groove rings (8) with the alternately arranged bristle bundles (3) and strip-like wash elements (4) in a vertical scrub brush per Figure 2. Hence, Figure 2 must not be taken as true to scale.

The number of radially projecting bristle threads per tuft (18) is 2×36 , yet this specification as well must only be taken as an example.

The distance (13) between the tips (6) of the bristles (3) and the free ends of the strip-like wash elements (4) is around 5 cm in the sample embodiment. The strip-like wash elements (4), as in the state of the art (European Patent Application EU-A-0 934 710), are folded double and secured in the grooves (11) of the groove ring (8) by locking pins (12). The tips of these strip-like wash elements (4) are slotted to form strips (5) around 4 mm in width.

Figure 5 shows a variant of Figure 2, the scrub brush (1) being designed as a horizontal roof brush and being located in the washing position at a vehicle (16). This scrub brush (1) has areas (7) with peripherally alternating wash elements (3, 4) at both ends. The length of the region (7) can vary at will. In the sample embodiment shown, it comprises two groove rings (8). In this arrangement, the alternating washing elements (3, 4) are situated at the marginal areas of the vehicle and in particular at the roof edge regions (17) on both sides. In this way, the longer bristle-like washing elements (3) can

especially easily reach the roof edge regions (17) and effectively wash them. This is especially advantageous at the roof junction zone and the sloping side surfaces of the vehicle body. Especially for vehicles with laterally recessed roofs, this supports the washing action of the side brushes, which cannot always optimally reach the slanting side surfaces of the body and especially the roof edge regions (17).

Figures 6 and 7 show a variant for the fastening technique and the positioning possibilities of the different wash elements (3, 4). Figure 6 shows a lengthwise section through a groove ring (9) and a shaft (2). Its surface is provided with several radial boreholes (14, 15), in which the bristle-like wash elements (3) assembled into bundles (18) and also the strip-like wash elements (4) likewise presented here as individual strips and possibly also assembled into bundles (18) are secured. For the attachment, suitable fastening elements (19) are used at the inside end of the opening or borehole (14, 15), being configured as a staple or a strap and engaging with loops of the bundles (18) or the wash elements (3, 4).

Figure 6 shows various positioning options. In the uppermost picture, bristles (3) and strips (4) are jointly secured in an opening (14, 15). In this case, all or only some of the openings (14, 15) of the fastening ring (9) or the shaft (2) can be outfitted in this manner. This variant is the closest packing of the alternately arranged or mingled wash elements (3, 4).

In the lower portion of Figure 6, a different variant is shown. Here, the bristles (3) and strips (4) are arranged separately and each secured in their own openings (14, 15). As the picture shows, the alternating sequence here can be different from the preceding sample embodiments. There is a pattern of pairs, every two strips (4) or strip bundles (18) alternating with two bristles (3) or bristle bundles (18). The alternating sequence here is depicted in the axial direction of the lengthwise axis (20). But it can also exist additionally or alternatively in the circumferential direction. The openings (14, 15) can be arranged in uniform circumferential and axial rows.

Figure 7 shows a variant for the configuration and arrangement of the openings (14, 15). The openings (14) are configured as cylindrical boreholes and serve here primarily to fasten bundles (18) of bristles (3). The other boreholes (15) have an essentially rectangular configuration in cross section and serve to secure individual strips (4) or small strip bundles (18). As the arrangement in Figure 7 illustrates, there are four boreholes (15) provided for the strips (4), arranged in a cross and surrounded on the outside by six cylindrical boreholes (14) for the bristle bundles (18). This positioning pattern may repeat itself appropriately in the peripheral direction and/or the axial direction.

Various modifications of the depicted embodiments are possible. First, the materials and the distribution of the wash elements (3, 4) can vary at will. In the embodiment depicted, the peripheral distribution at each groove ring (8) is identical. As an alternative, it can also vary from one groove ring to another. In this case, not only the peripheral distribution and alternation pattern, but also the number of different wash elements (3, 4) can vary. The aforementioned axial alternation of the wash elements (3, 4) in the depicted embodiment is accomplished by a mutual twisting of the groove rings (8) each time by one peripheral alternation increment of the wash elements (3, 4). As an alternative, the outfitting of the groove rings (8) with the wash elements can also be appropriately twisted.

Furthermore, the fastening of the wash elements (3, 4) to the carrying element (2) can vary at will. Instead of the groove rings (8), other fastening elements can also be used, for example, ones consisting of rigid half-shell elements, elastic sleeves, or the like. The wash elements (3, 4) can also be fastened directly on the shaft (2) or another carrying element. Instead of groove fastenings, any other connection techniques can also be used.

In a further modification, the washing devices (1) also need not be configured as rotating scrub brushes with a rigid shaft (2) and a single axis of rotation. They can also have any other configuration and can consist of revolving bands with wash elements (3,

4) on the outside or any other design. There can also be several axes of rotation or movement in this case.

LIST OF REFERENCE NUMBERS

- 1 Washing device, scrub brush
- 2 Carrying element, shaft
- 3 Wash element, bristles
- 4 Wash element, strips
- 5 Slit strips
- 6 Tips of bristles
- 7 Lower region of scrub brush
- 8 Groove ring, fastening ring
- 9 Spring
- 10 Periphery
- 11 Groove
- 12 Locking pin
- 13 Spacing
- 14 Radial opening, borehole
- 15 Radial opening, borehole
- 16 Vehicle
- 17 Roof edge region
- 18 Bundle, tuft
- 19 Fastening element
- 20 Lengthwise axis, axial direction
- 21 Outer circumference

ABSTRACT**WASHING DEVICE FOR A CAR WASH UNIT**

The invention relates to a washing device, in particular a wash brush [(1)] for car wash units, which is rotationally or peripherally positioned and powered. [Said wash brush (1)] The washing device has several essentially horizontal projecting, bristle type wash elements [(3)] located at its periphery and several strip-shaped wash elements [(4)] which are arranged in an alternating fashion. The bristle-shaped wash elements [(3)] are longer and harder than [said] the strip shaped wash elements [(4) and are also harder than said latter]. The strip-shaped wash elements [(4)] can be made of a closed pore foam material or a fiber material. [Said] The wash elements [(3, 4) are alternately, located] can be arranged in an alternating fashion in the peripheral direction and/or [in] the axial direction.

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WASHING DEVICE FOR A CAR WASH UNIT

The invention concerns a rotating or revolving washing device, especially a scrub brush for car wash units with the features in the preamble of the main claim.

Such a scrub brush is known from US-A-4,377,878. At the periphery of the shaft of the scrub brush, soft pliant wash elements made from felt and stiff bristles are arranged in an alternating manner in the circumferential direction. The bristles are distinctly shorter than the wash elements and serve as support elements for them. The bristles are not involved in the washing process, nor are they washing elements. The washing of the vehicle is accomplished only by the soft pliant wash elements made of felt or another fibrous material. Although such wash elements are advantageous when used for gently washing a vehicle, they do not provide an optimal cleaning action.

DE-U-92 14 265 shows a scrub brush with a mixture of bristle-like coarse wash elements and strip-like soft wash elements made from a fibrous web. The scrub brush here is divided into several segments along its length, and the different wash elements alternate in the axial direction of the brush. There are bristles at the upper and lower region of the vertical side brush, while the softer fibrous web strips are arranged in the center region. The bristles and the fibrous web strips have the same length here. The bristles possess good cleaning ability and are even able to loosen and remove stuck-on dirt, but there is the danger of them causing minor damage to the surface being cleaned.

A similar scrub brush is known from US-A-3,613,140. This is designed as a horizontal wheel washing brush and consists of various wash elements, which differ in material and length and are arranged in an alternating manner in the lengthwise direction of the brush. The longer wash elements are supposed to reach the insides of the vehicle's wheel or rim and consist of a soft bristle-like material. The shorter and likewise bristle-like wash elements are supposed to clean the exterior wheel and rim areas and are harder or stiffer than the longer bristles. They should consist of nylon or metal wire.

DE-U-93 01 692, finally, shows another vertical side brush, which is designed similar to the aforesaid side brush of DE-U-92 14 265. Here as well, the side brush has only bristles in the lower region and textile strips in the upper region; furthermore, shorter supporting bristles can be arranged. The bristles and textile strips have the same length, while the bristles for the support function can also be shorter.

EP-A-0876778 shows a washing device for car wash units that has bristles of different length, and these bristles may also have different stiffnesses.

Therefore, the problem is to modify a generic washing device so that an improved and more thorough washing of vehicles is made possible.

This problem is solved with the characterizing features of Claim 1. Advantageous embodiments will be found in the subsidiary claims.

Details of the invention are schematically depicted in the drawing. This shows:

- Figure 1: a vertical section through a scrub brush with bristle-like bundles and strip-like wash elements arranged in an alternating manner in the circumferential direction,
- Figure 2: a vertical section through a vertical washing brush with bristle bundles and strip-like wash elements distributed in the lower region,
- Figure 3: a cross section through a scrub brush,
- Figure 4: a lengthwise section through a groove ring to accommodate bristle bundles and strip-like wash elements,
- Figure 5: a variant of Figure 2 as a roof brush for a vehicle,
- Figure 6: a variant of the distribution and attachment of the wash elements, and
- Figure 7: a top view of an attachment per Figure 6.

In the example of Figure 1, a washing device (1) is shown, which is configured in the preferred sample embodiment as a rotating scrub brush (1), especially a side brush. The carrying element of the scrub brush (1), such as a shaft (2), can turn essentially about the vertical axis and is driven by a motor. The mounting and the propulsion are consistent with the state of the art and require no further explanation.

In the sample embodiment there are several adjoining groove rings (8) attached in twist-lock manner in succession on the shaft (2). The groove rings (8) serve to accommodate strip-like wash elements (4) and bristle-like wash elements (3), which are preferably arranged in bundles (18).

The arrangement of the bristle-like wash elements (3) and the strip-like wash elements (4) occurs at the groove rings (8) in a closely-spaced alternation or a tight blending, as is especially evident from Figures 3 and 6. The alternation or alternating positioning of the different wash elements (3, 4) can be of various kinds. Preferably, there is an alternation at least in the circumferential direction of the scrub brush (1). In addition, an alternation in the axial direction (20) of the scrub brush (1) can occur. In the preferred embodiment, the different wash elements (3, 4) immediately follow each other. As an alternative, any other given pattern of alternation is also possible. For example, small groups of two strips (4) each alternate with groups of two bristle bundles (3, 18) each in the peripheral direction. The groups can also be of different size.

The strip-like wash elements (4) in the depicted example are configured as radially spaced cloths, having slits on their exterior edges, and thereby producing narrow strips (5). As an alternative, the wash elements (4) can also consist of individual thin strips or bundles or tufts (18) of individual strips.

The bristle-like wash elements (3) are longer than the strip-like wash elements (4). When stretched out, the tips (6) of the bristle-like wash elements (3) extend beyond the ends of the strip-like wash elements (4) or the slit strips (5) by the distance (13) (cf. Figure 3). When the scrub brush (1) is rotating and freely unfolded, the projecting bristle-like wash elements (3) determine the outer circumference (21). Thus, the projecting bristle tips (6) are the first to make contact with the vehicle (16) and commence an intensive cleaning of the vehicle surfaces. The strip-like wash elements (4) then follow up, especially as the scrub brush (1) progressively penetrates deeper, and they complete the cleaning in a gentle manner.

The strip-like wash elements (4) consist of a soft, compressible material. They have a thickness of around 2 mm to 3 mm and in the preferred embodiment they are made from a closed-pore polyethylene foam, which takes up little water. As an alternative, they can also consist of a fibrous material, such as cloth or felt or any other suitable material.

The bristle-like wash elements (3), on the other hand, consist of a harder, thin threadlike synthetic material. For example, they are made of polyethylene and have an X-shaped cross section. Polyamide, polypropylene or other materials can also be considered as alternatives. The individual bristles (3) can be assembled into tufts (18) of bristles.

In the sample embodiment of Figure 1, the alternating peripheral arrangement of bristle-like wash elements (3) and strip-like wash elements (4) extends over the entire length of the scrub brush (1). The peripheral distribution and positioning of the wash elements (3, 4) can remain the same for the length of the brush. But as an alternative, the additional alternation of the wash elements (3, 4) depicted in the drawing can also occur in the axial direction.

Figure 2 shows a variant in which the scrub brush (1) has alternately arranged groups of bristle-like wash elements (3) and groups of strip-like wash elements (4) only in its lower region (7). The alternation in this case, once again, can occur in the peripheral direction and additionally in the axial direction.

When such a scrub brush (1) per Figure 2 is used as a side brush in car wash units, the lower regions (7) of the scrub brush (1) particularly work on the especially grimy zones of the vehicle, for example, the door sill region, and tough grime is removed due to the alternating arrangement of bristles (3) and strips (4). However, the paint surface is treated gently.

In the sample embodiment of Figure 3, a scrub brush (1) is shown in cross section, on whose shaft (2) several groove rings (8) are arranged in succession, twist-locked by springs (9). For sake of clarity, the length of the wash elements (3, 4) is shown foreshortened. A plurality of axial grooves (11) is distributed uniformly at the outer periphery of the groove ring (8). In the example, there are twelve axial grooves (11) present, in which the folded strip-like wash elements (4) are introduced and held by means of lock pins (12).

In the area between the grooves (11), there are twelve radial openings or boreholes (14), which are designed to accommodate the bristle bundles (3). The example of Figure 4 shows that six boreholes (14) are arranged along a surface line of the groove ring (8) to accommodate the bristle tufts (18), so that there are twelve series of such bristle bundles distributed over the circumference.

In practice, it has proven to be advantageous to equip the bottom four groove rings (8) with the alternately arranged bristle bundles (3) and strip-like wash elements (4) in a vertical scrub brush per Figure 2. Hence, Figure 2 must not be taken as true to scale.

The number of radially projecting bristle threads per tuft (18) is 2×36 , yet this specification as well must only be taken as an example.

The distance (13) between the tips (6) of the bristles (3) and the free ends of the strip-like wash elements (4) is around 5 cm in the sample embodiment. The strip-like wash elements (4), as in the state of the art (EU-A-0 934 710), are folded double and secured in the grooves (11) of the groove ring (8) by locking pins (12). The tips of these strip-like wash elements (4) are slotted to form strips (5) around 4 mm in width.

Figure 5 shows a variant of Figure 2, the scrub brush (1) being designed as a horizontal roof brush and being located in the washing position at a vehicle (16). This scrub brush (1) has areas (7) with peripherally alternating wash elements (3, 4) at both ends. The length of the region (7) can vary at will. In the sample embodiment shown, it comprises two groove rings (8). In this arrangement, the alternating washing elements (3, 4) are situated at the marginal areas of the vehicle and in particular at the roof edge regions (17) on both sides. In this way, the longer bristle-like washing elements (3) can especially easily reach the roof edge regions (17) and effectively wash them. This is especially advantageous at the roof junction zone and the sloping side surfaces of the vehicle body. Especially for vehicles with laterally recessed roofs, this supports the washing action of the side brushes, which cannot always optimally reach the slanting side surfaces of the body and especially the roof edge regions (17).

Figures 6 and 7 show a variant for the fastening technique and the positioning possibilities of the different wash elements (3, 4). Figure 6 shows a lengthwise section through a groove ring (9) and a shaft (2). Its surface is provided with several radial boreholes (14, 15), in which the bristle-like wash elements (3) assembled into bundles (18) and also the strip-like wash elements (4) likewise presented here as individual strips and possibly also assembled into bundles (18) are secured. For the attachment, suitable fastening elements (19) are used at the inside end of the opening or borehole (14, 15), being configured as a staple or a strap and engaging with loops of the bundles (18) or the wash elements (3, 4).

Figure 6 shows various positioning options. In the uppermost picture, bristles (3) and strips (4) are jointly secured in an opening (14, 15). In this case, all or only some of the openings (14, 15) of the fastening ring (9) or the shaft (2) can be outfitted in this manner. This variant is the closest packing of the alternately arranged or mingled wash elements (3, 4).

In the lower portion of Figure 6, a different variant is shown. Here, the bristles (3) and strips (4) are arranged separately and each secured in their own openings (14, 15). As the

picture shows, the alternating sequence here can be different from the preceding sample embodiments. There is a pattern of pairs, every two strips (4) or strip bundles (18) alternating with two bristles (3) or bristle bundles (18). The alternating sequence here is depicted in the axial direction of the lengthwise axis (20). But it can also exist additionally or alternatively in the circumferential direction. The openings (14, 15) can be arranged in uniform circumferential and axial rows.

Figure 7 shows a variant for the configuration and arrangement of the openings (14, 15). The openings (14) are configured as cylindrical boreholes and serve here primarily to fasten bundles (18) of bristles (3). The other boreholes (15) have an essentially rectangular configuration in cross section and serve to secure individual strips (4) or small strip bundles (18). As the arrangement in Figure 7 illustrates, there are four boreholes (15) provided for the strips (4), arranged in a cross and surrounded on the outside by six cylindrical boreholes (14) for the bristle bundles (18). This positioning pattern may repeat itself appropriately in the peripheral direction and/or the axial direction.

Various modifications of the depicted embodiments are possible. First, the materials and the distribution of the wash elements (3, 4) can vary at will. In the embodiment depicted, the peripheral distribution at each groove ring (8) is identical. As an alternative, it can also vary from one groove ring to another. In this case, not only the peripheral distribution and alternation pattern, but also the number of different wash elements (3, 4) can vary. The aforementioned axial alternation of the wash elements (3, 4) in the depicted embodiment is accomplished by a mutual twisting of the groove rings (8) each time by one peripheral alternation increment of the wash elements (3, 4). As an alternative, the outfitting of the groove rings (8) with the wash elements can also be appropriately twisted.

Furthermore, the fastening of the wash elements (3, 4) to the carrying element (2) can vary at will. Instead of the groove rings (8), other fastening elements can also be used, for example, ones consisting of rigid half-shell elements, elastic sleeves, or the like. The wash elements (3, 4) can also be fastened directly on the shaft (2) or another carrying element. Instead of groove fastenings, any other connection techniques can also be used.

In a further modification, the washing devices (1) also need not be configured as rotating scrub brushes with a rigid shaft (2) and a single axis of rotation. They can also have any other configuration and can consist of revolving bands with wash elements (3, 4) on the

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outside or any other design. There can also be several axes of rotation or movement in this case.

LIST OF REFERENCE NUMBERS

- 1 Washing device, scrub brush
- 2 Carrying element, shaft
- 3 Wash element, bristles
- 4 Wash element, strips
- 5 Slit strips
- 6 Tips of bristles
- 7 Lower region of scrub brush
- 8 Groove ring, fastening ring
- 9 Spring
- 10 Periphery
- 11 Groove
- 12 Locking pin
- 13 Spacing
- 14 Radial opening, borehole
- 15 Radial opening, borehole
- 16 Vehicle
- 17 Roof edge region
- 18 Bundle, tuft
- 19 Fastening element
- 20 Lengthwise axis, axial direction
- 21 Outer circumference

CLAIMS

1. Washing device, especially scrub brush for car wash units, which is mounted to revolve or rotate and is propelled and has several essentially transverse spaced bristle-like and strip-like wash elements (3, 4) on its periphery, that are arranged in an alternating manner in the circumferential direction and/or in the axial direction, characterized in that the bristle-like wash elements (3) have a greater length than the strip-like wash elements (4) and the bristle-like wash elements (3) are coarser than the strip-like wash elements (4).
2. Washing device per Claim 1, characterized in that the strip-like wash elements (4) consist of a plastic foam, preferably a closed-pore polyethylene foam, or a fiber material, preferably cloth or felt.
3. Washing device according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the strip-like wash elements (4) consist of individual thin strips or of cloths with slits (5).
4. Washing device according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the wash elements (3, 4) are arranged in an alternating manner in the circumferential direction.
5. Washing device according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the wash elements (3, 4) are arranged in an alternating manner in the axial direction.
6. Washing device according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the wash elements (3, 4) are secured to groove rings (8), the bristle-like wash elements (3) are configured as bristle tufts (18) and consist of a thread-like plastic material, preferably polyethylene, polyamide or polypropylene.
7. Washing device according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the bristle-like and strip-like wash elements (4) are arranged in a lower region (7) of a scrub brush (1) rotating about an essentially vertical axis.
8. Washing device according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the bristle-like and strip-like wash elements (4) are arranged in two marginal areas (7) of a scrub brush (1) rotating about an essentially horizontal axis.

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9. Washing device according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the wash elements (3, 4) are secured to groove rings (8), which are arranged in twist-lock manner on a carrying element (2).
10. Washing device according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the wash elements (3, 4) are fastened to the lower groove rings (8), preferably to the bottom four groove rings (8) of the scrub brush (1).
11. Washing device according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that twelve rows of bristle-like wash elements (3) and twelve rows of strip-like wash elements (4) are arranged in uniform alternation, distributed about the circumference on the individual groove ring (8).
12. Washing device according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the individual bristle row (3) has six bristle tufts (18), each with 36 threads, for example.
13. Washing device according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the bristle-like wash elements (3) in the stretched-out condition are around 5 cm longer than the strip-like wash elements (4).
14. Washing device according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the bristle-like wash elements (3) are fastened in radial openings (14) of the shaft (2) or the groove ring (8) and arranged between axial grooves (11), which are designed to accommodate the strip-like wash elements (4).
15. Washing device according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the bristle-like wash elements (3) and the strip-like wash elements (4) are each arranged in bundles (18) or individually and are uniformly distributed peripherally and axially, and the bundles are secured in their own radial openings (14, 15) of the shaft (2) or the groove ring (8).
16. Washing device according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the bristle-like wash elements (3) and the strip-like wash elements (4) are secured [in] common radial openings (14, 15) of the shaft (2) or the groove ring (8).

(12) NACH DEM VERtrag ÜBER DIE INTERNATIONALE ZUSAMMENARBEIT AUF DEM GEBIET DES PATENTWESENS (PCT) VERÖFFENTLICHTE INTERNATIONALE ANMELDUNG

(19) Weltorganisation für geistiges Eigentum
Internationales Büro(43) Internationales Veröffentlichungsdatum
29. März 2001 (29.03.2001)

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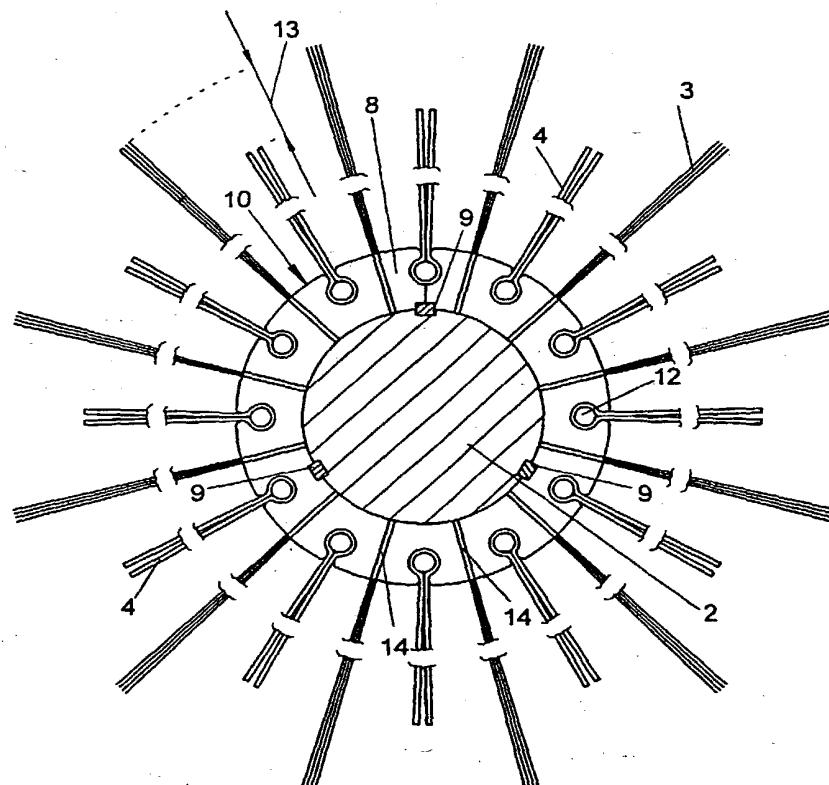
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WO 01/21037 A1(51) Internationale Patentklassifikation⁷: **A46B 13/00**(21) Internationales Aktenzeichen: **PCT/EP00/09166**(71) Anmelder (für alle Bestimmungsstaaten mit Ausnahme von US): **WASHTEC HOLDING GMBH [DE/DE]**; Argonstrasse 7, 86153 Augsburg (DE).(22) Internationales Anmeldedatum:
19. September 2000 (19.09.2000)

(72) Erfinder; und

(75) Erfinder/Anmelder (nur für US): **WINDEL, Günter [DE/DE]**; Steinstrasse 15, 63825 Schöllkrippen (DE).(25) Einreichungssprache: **Deutsch**(26) Veröffentlichungssprache: **Deutsch**(74) Anwalt: **CHARRIER RAPP & LIEBAU; P. O. Box 31 02 60, D-86063 Augsburg (DE)**.(30) Angaben zur Priorität:
299 16 541.8 20. September 1999 (20.09.1999) DE(81) Bestimmungsstaaten (national): **CA, NO, US**.*[Fortsetzung auf der nächsten Seite]*

(54) Title: WASHING DEVICE FOR A CAR WASH UNIT

(54) Bezeichnung: WASCHEINRICHTUNG FÜR FAHRZEUGWASCHANLAGEN



(57) Abstract: The invention relates to a washing device, in particular a wash brush (1) for car wash units, which is rotationally or peripherally positioned and powered. Said wash brush (1) has several essentially horizontal projecting, bristle type wash elements (3) located at its periphery and several strip-shaped wash elements (4) which are arranged in an alternating fashion. The bristle-shaped wash elements (3) are longer than said strip shaped wash elements (4) and are also harder than said latter. The strip-shaped wash elements (4) can be made of a closed pore foam material or a fiber material. Said wash elements (3, 4) are alternately, located in an alternating fashion in the peripheral direction and/or in the axial direction.

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[Fortsetzung auf der nächsten Seite]

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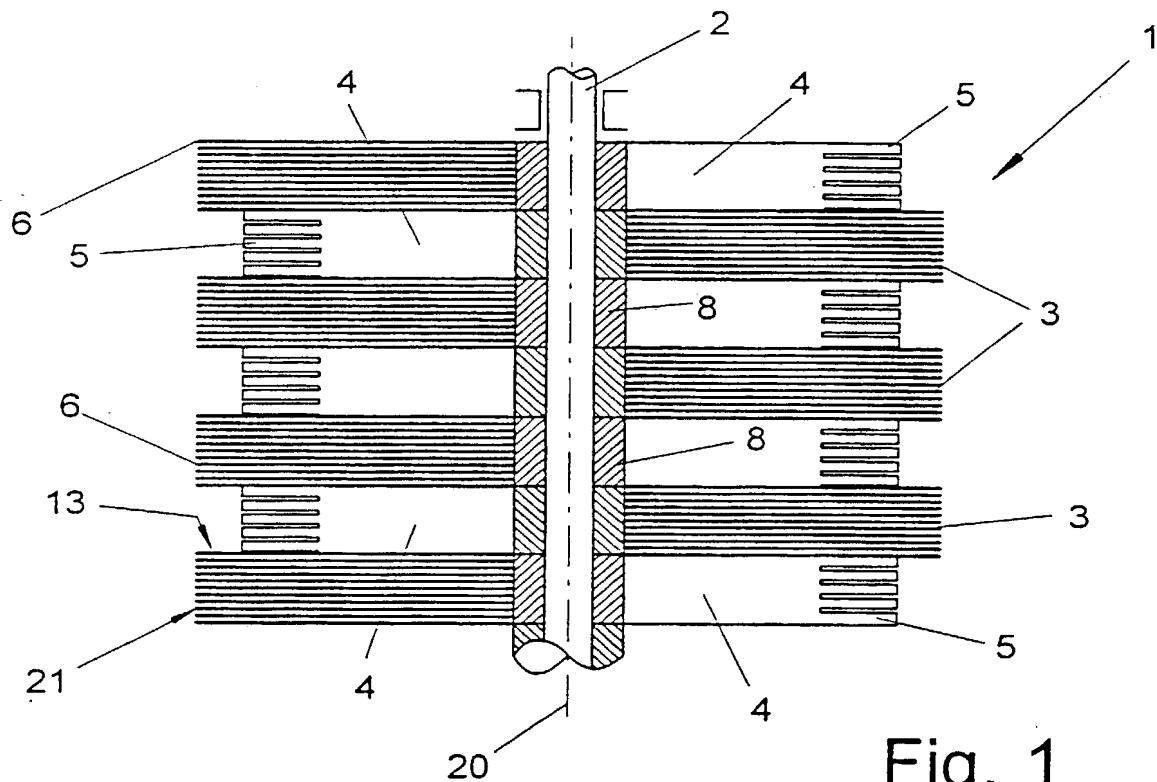


Fig. 1

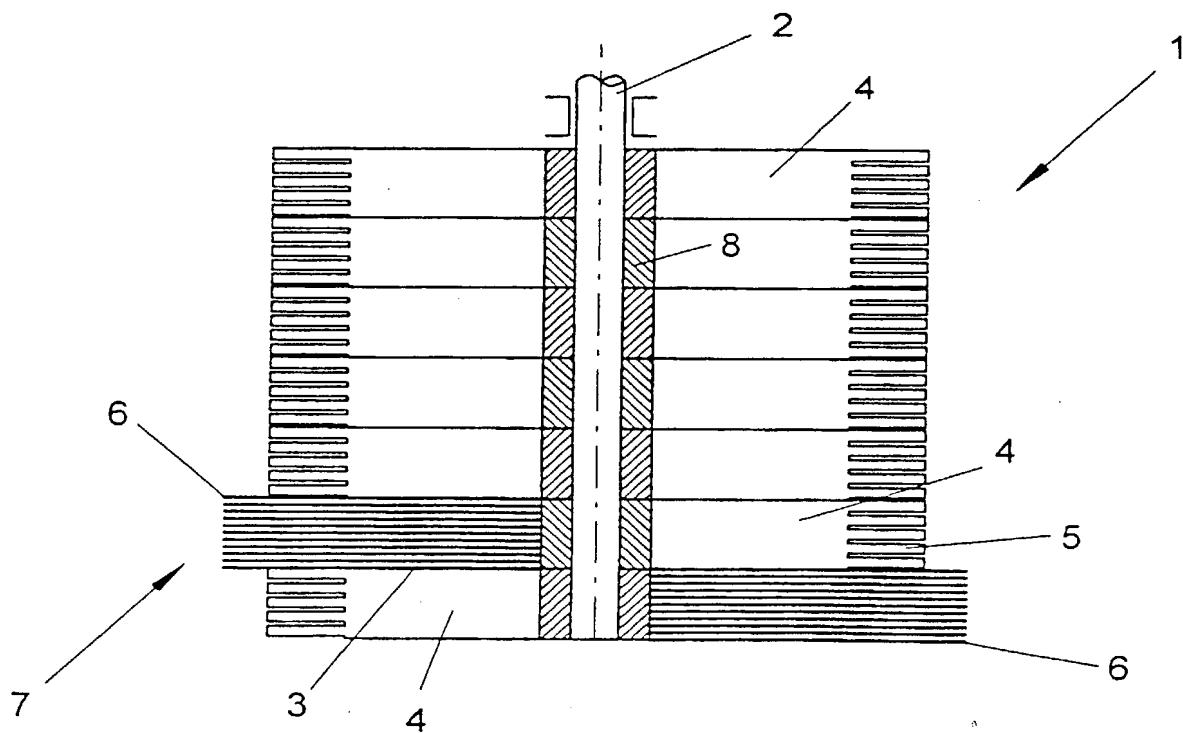


Fig. 2

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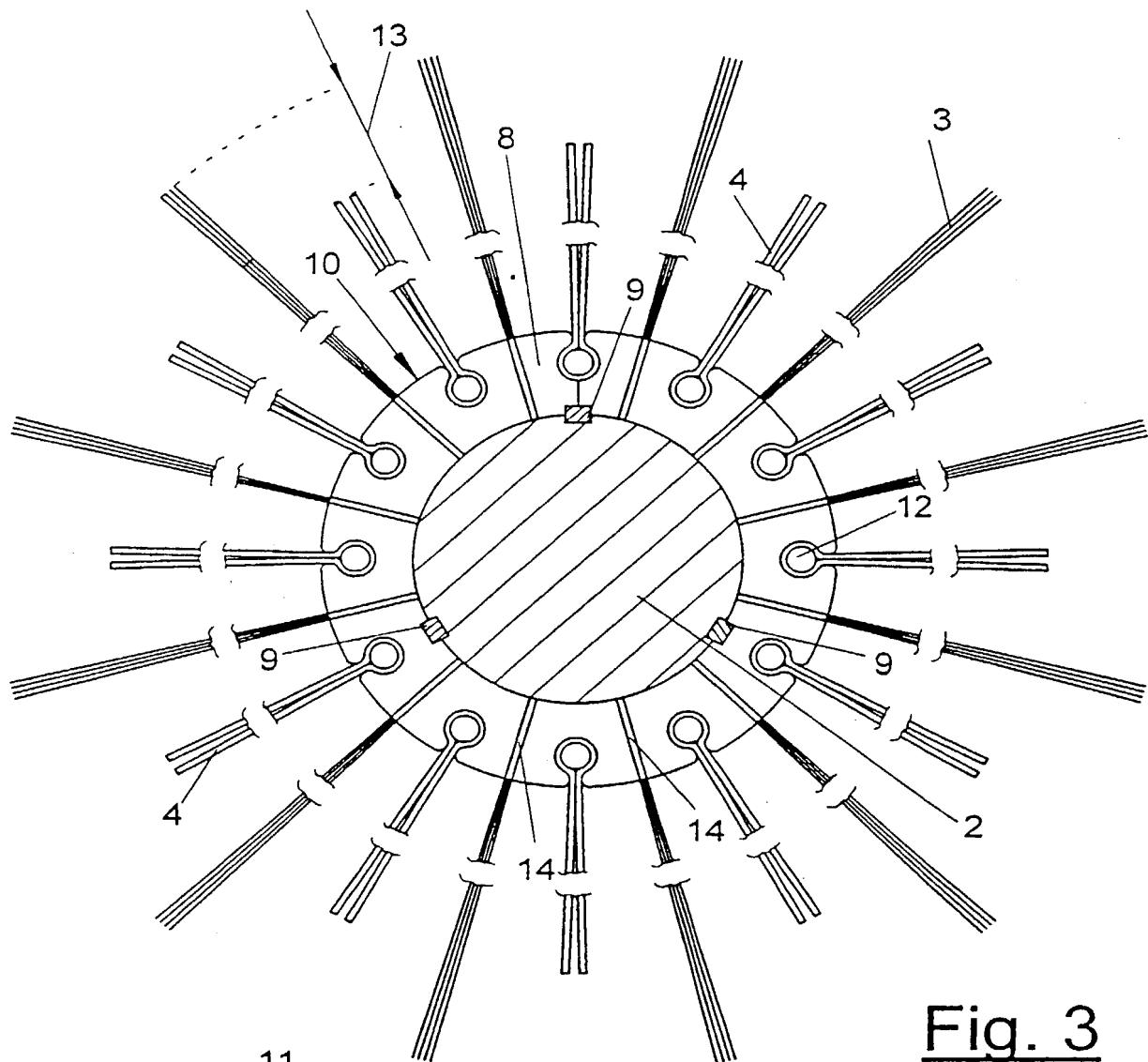


Fig. 3

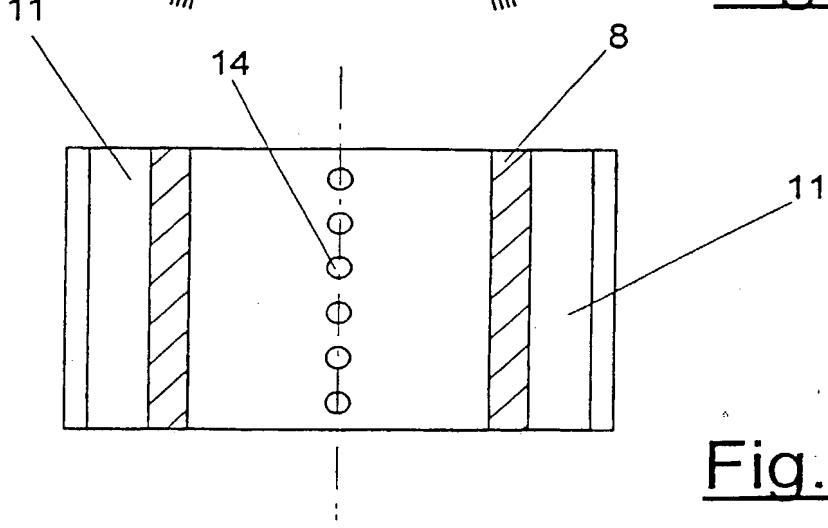
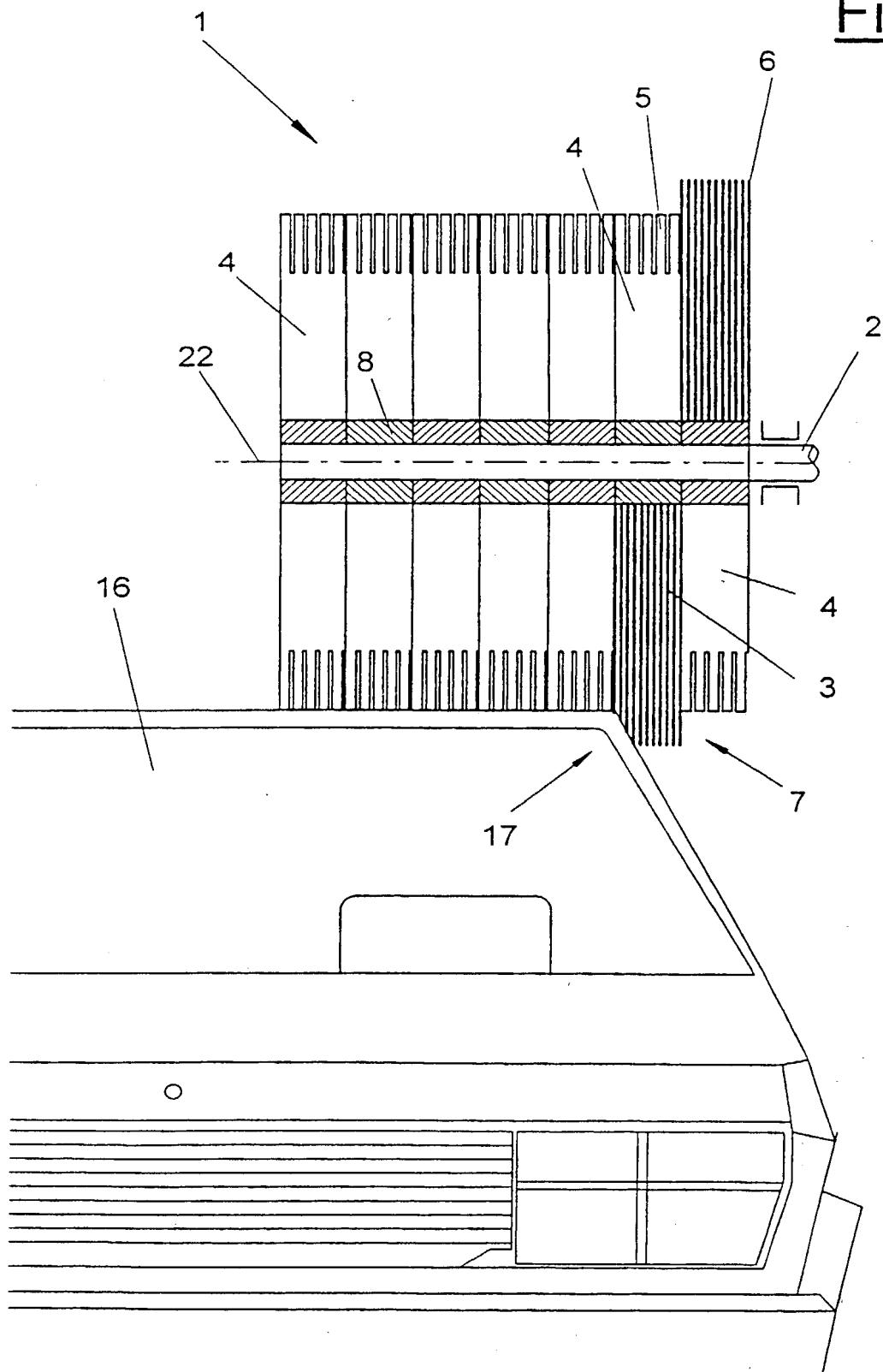
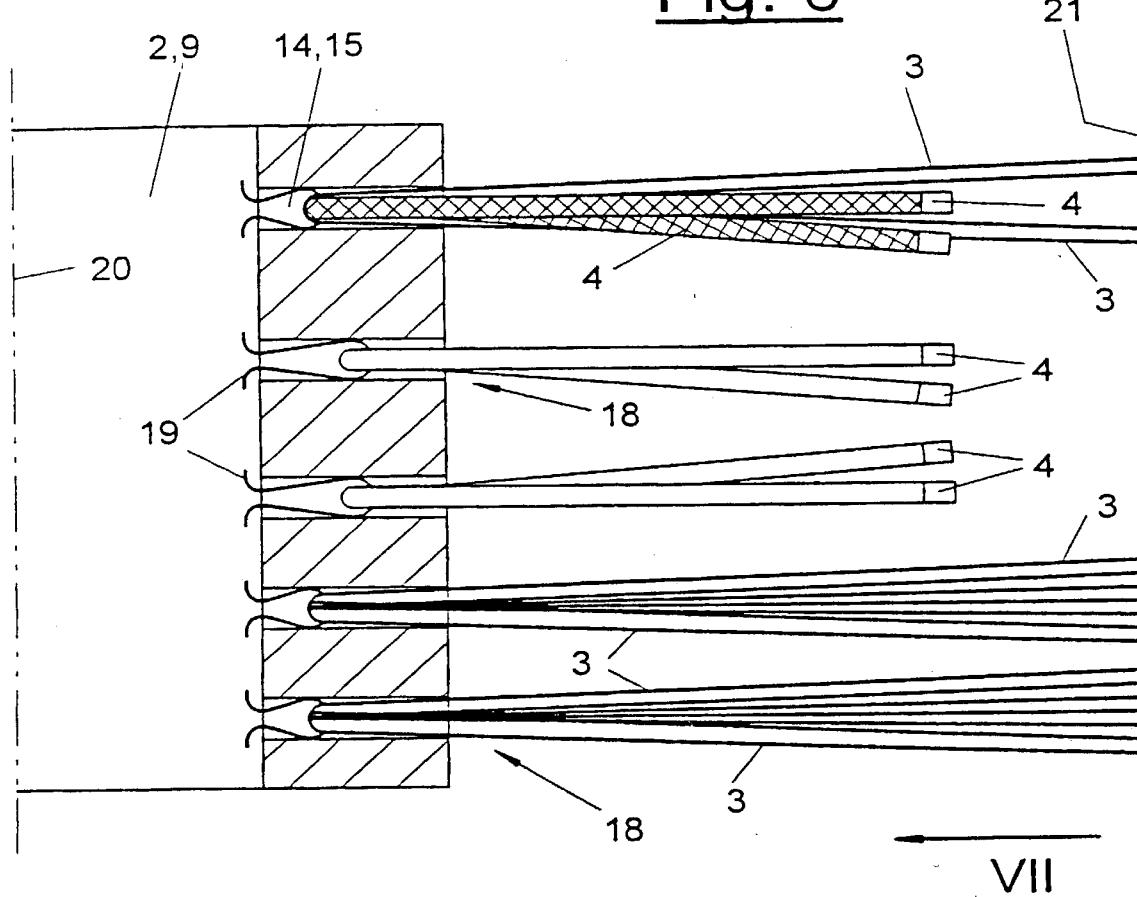


Fig. 4

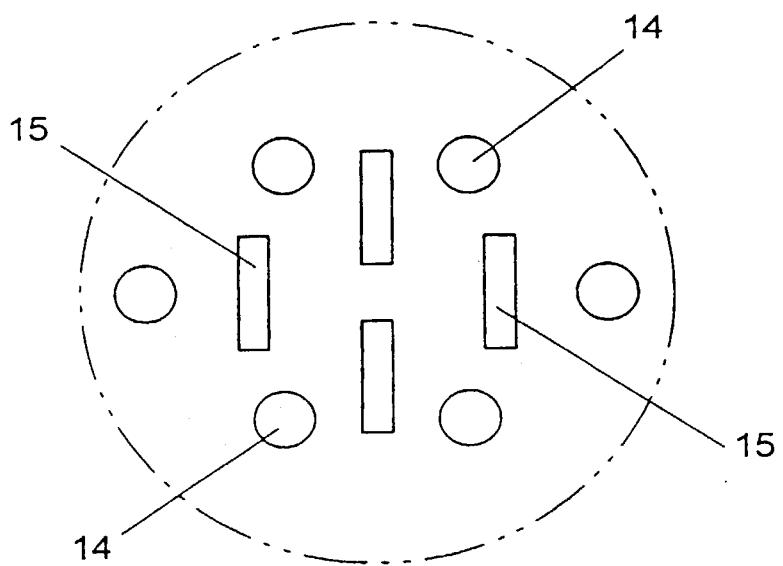
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Fig. 5

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Fig. 6

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Fig. 7

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DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR PATENT APPLICATION

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name;

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter that is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

WASHING DEVICE FOR A CAR WASHING UNIT

the specification of which:

X was filed
under Attorney's Docket Number 740-X02-011
as Application No. 10/088,717 on March 19, 2002
National Stage of International Application PCT/EP00/09166 filed 09/19/2000

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information material to the patentability of this application in accordance with 37 CFR 1.56.

I hereby claim the benefit of foreign priority under 35 USC 119(a)-(d) or 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or 365(a) of any PCT international application which designated at least one country other than the United States of America, listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate or of any PCT international application having a filing date before that of the application the priority of which is claimed:

Prior Foreign Application(s):		Priority Claimed
Number	Country	Yes No
299 16 541.8	Germany	Sept. 20, 1999 XXX

I hereby claim the benefit of United States priority under 35 USC 120 of any United States application(s) or 365(c) of any PCT international applications designating the United States of America, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is disclosed in a listed one of the prior United States or PCT international application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 USC 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information material to the patentability of this

application as defined in 37 CFR 1.56 which became available between the filing date of
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U.S. Parent Application or PCT Parent (Filing Date) Parent Patent Number
Number

POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following
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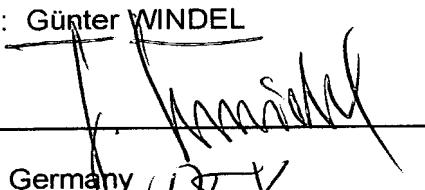
Martin Fleit Reg. No. 16,900
Robert C. Kain Reg. No. 30,648
Jon A. Gibbons Reg. No. 37,333
Stephen C. Bongini Reg. No. 40,917
Jose Gutman Reg. No. 35,171
Paul D. Bianco Reg. No. 43,500

Send correspondence to MARTIN FLEIT, Fleit, Kain, Gibbons, Gutman & Bongini, P.L.,
520 Brickell Key Drive, Miami, Florida 33131, and direct all telephone calls to MARTIN
FLEIT at (305) 536-9020.

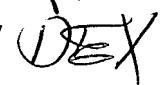
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HOO

FULL NAME OF INVENTOR: Günter WINDEL

INVENTOR'S SIGNATURE: 

DATE: 11.07.02

RESIDENCE: Schöllkrippen, Germany 

CITIZENSHIP: Germany

POST OFFICE ADDRESS: Steinstrasse 15, 83625 Schöllkrippen, Germany